Survival Guide
2016 Summer Innsbruck Program

Dr. James Mallett, Director
Dr. John Tichenor, On-Site Director
Nancy Kernan, Coordinator
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Study abroad is an adventure of a lifetime. The decision to study abroad takes courage and determination. It also requires thorough thought and preparation. The information in this manual is meant to help you decide if you are ready for the challenges of study abroad and prepare for the experience.

Although we have done our best to create detailed and comprehensive manuals and provide a thorough orientation, one can never be completely prepared for the study abroad experience. There are too many variables and “unknowns.” Be aware that some information will only be available to you upon arrival.

The successful study abroad student has a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity, is flexible, resourceful, and self-reliant, and is able to handle the unique stresses of studying abroad with maturity and poise.

**Travel Safe:**

Remember this is a summer school program for students mature enough to study and travel independently – not summer camp or a tour-guide vacation program. This means that, other than for your classes, no one is “checking” on you. Therefore, when you are not going to be “home” at the WIST Haus Panorama you should tell someone (your roommate, etc), or leave a note in your room, where you’re going and when you will return – it’s just the way mature adults act!

As we all know the world has changed. There is no question that there are more anti-American feelings in Europe than in the past; we can do nothing about that. Also, we can do nothing about other American students who add to the perception that all American students are immature and rude.

However, you can travel and enjoy the experience of Europe; just be prepared to suspend judgment – the American way is not always the “only” way; and, we have much to learn from others.

This is not the time, nor Europe the place, to be “acting out.” This means: keep your feet off the furniture, avoid running in packs, cut out the loud and boisterous “I’m wild and crazy” showing off, and avoid confrontations when someone wants to explain how the U.S. is screwing up the world. Just be the normal mature and polite you; the person you used to be when Granny came to visit right before Christmas. By the way, if you dress up just a little when you
travel and try to speak the language, no matter how broken it is, you’ll be surprised how well you’ll be treated!

**Tips on getting there:**

**Before You Leave**

**Email:** Make sure that the Summer Innsbruck Program office has your most up-to-date email address. We will be contacting you frequently with advisories and announcements. You will not receive them if your email addresses are not current.

You can check your Stetson email “anywhere on the planet” as long as you have access to the Internet.

**Cell Phone:** If you already have a cell phone, check with your provider to see if you can get international service that will work in Austria. You may be able to purchase a new chip to insert in your phone for international access. Be very sure to be specific with your provider about what your situation will be—the country or countries you will be in; the fact that you will want to make and receive calls locally, and to and from the U.S. Also, check with students who have just returned from study abroad to see if they have a cell phone for sale.

You may want to purchase a new cell phone before you leave for your study abroad site. Check out [http://www.telestial.com/](http://www.telestial.com/). Although the SIP office cannot endorse or recommend this company, students at other schools have used them with satisfactory results. The beauty of purchasing your cell phone pre-departure is that your friends and family will have your number before you leave.

Be aware that cell phones don’t always work. This is especially true in cases of civil or natural disasters. It is always wise to have enough change in local currency or a phone card on you in order to make a call from a public phone.

**Neck Pouch/Money Belt:** One of the best ways to safeguard against purse-snatchers and pickpockets is to purchase a neck pouch or money belt in which you can conceal your money and documents under your clothing. They can be found in luggage shops, outdoor recreation stores, and online.

You may want to consider carrying your money and cards in several different places. For example, you could carry a small amount of cash in your purse or wallet, your ATM card in your neck pouch, and a credit card in a zipped pocket inside your backpack (never carry anything of value in the outer pockets of luggage, bags, or backpacks). This way, if your purse is snatched, you have other sources of money on your person.
At the Airport
Check-in, Money Exchange, Security:

- Have your passport and ticket ready to show the check-in agent.
- If you have not already changed money, proceed to the Currency Exchange kiosk before passing through security. We recommend that you have about $100 in the local currency on you before you board the plane. This will give you some money to spend immediately upon arrival, and one less thing to think about when you are tired and have a million other things on your mind.
- Proceed to the security checkpoint. Your friends and family will not be able to accompany you beyond this point as only ticketed passengers are allowed through the security checkpoint. Have your ticket, boarding pass, and passport ready to show the security people.
- Proceed to the boarding gate. You will need to show your passport, ticket, and boarding pass again in order to board the plane.

Missed Flights and Cancellations:

The possibility of your flight being cancelled is small. Remember that if this happens, you will be in the same boat as many other people. The airlines will advise you on what to do.

- In cases where a passenger is responsible for missing a flight, the airlines have no responsibility to get the passenger on another flight or reimburse the ticket—the passenger simply loses his ticket and will have to purchase a new one at his own expense. To avoid this situation, be sure to give yourself LOTS of time to get to the airport. Keep in mind that traffic, the possibility of accidents on the highway, difficulty parking at the airport, etc. all contribute to delays. **Be at the airport at least 3 hours before your flight is scheduled to depart.** With increased security, there are many opportunities for delays once you get to the airport.

- In cases where the airline is at fault for a missed flight (for example, a late connection or some cancellations), the airline will get passengers on the next available flight at no additional cost. If they cannot get passengers on a flight the same day, the airline will normally put passengers up in a hotel overnight at the airline's expense.

- In cases where the airlines have no control over cancellations, such as those due to security issues or severe weather, they will arrange for passengers to be on the next
available flight at no extra cost. However, they will not provide accommodations. Passengers have the option of sitting in the airport all night or getting a hotel room at their own expense. A hotel room would probably cost around $100-$150. Stetson will not reimburse this cost. If you are traveling with a group, and can’t stand the thought of sitting in the airport all night, you could split the cost of a hotel room between several people. What you decide to do depends on how much money you are willing to spend and how much tolerance you have for discomfort.

What to pack

Delta Airline’s luggage policy is: one free checked bag with maximum weight of 50 lbs and maximum size 62 inches (length x width x height). Second piece of luggage: $100.00. One free carry-on; may not exceed 17 lbs and may be no larger than 45 linear inches (approximately 22” x 14” x9”). One personal item described as: 1 purse, briefcase, small backpack, camera bag, computer bag, laptop or an item of a similar or smaller size.

Before You Pack:

• Call 1-800-555-1212 for the 800 number of the airline on which you will be traveling, or look up the airline’s web page.
• Your airline will provide you with information regarding the number of checked and carry-on bags allowed by that particular carrier. Check exact dimensions and weight limits. Don’t assume that it’s the same for two different airlines or that things have not changed since you last flew. Make sure that the person you talk to understands that you are taking an international flight; the rules differ from domestic flights.
• Stick to the number, size, and weight limits. If you don’t, you could end up paying hundreds of dollars for excess baggage or leaving something behind.
• Do not pack anything sharp in your carry-on. It will be confiscated.
• Do not lock your luggage unless it has a TSA approved lock. It may be searched at the airport. You can lock it after it has passed the security inspection.

Packing and Managing your Luggage:

• If you are flying to Orlando to transfer to Delta Airlines, please make certain that there exists adequate time for your luggage to transfer. Problems can occur in getting luggage out of customs coming in on later flights.
• Consider taking a medium size backpack and a large piece of rolling luggage. Make sure that all compartments and pockets can be locked, as these bags will serve as your checked luggage and things could be stolen. When you arrive, the backpack can go on
your back leaving your hands free to roll your other large bag and handle your carry-on.

- Things of great value (monetary or sentimental) should be left at home. Things of value that you must take (such as a camera) should never be packed in your checked baggage.
- Plan to get along on a limited wardrobe, as do most students abroad.

Remember that you alone will have to get all of your belongings to your residence.
- there are no porters at most destinations
- there are no luggage carts at many destinations; if there are luggage carts, they cannot be taken into restricted areas
- you may have to make plane changes, do train transfers, or take taxis and buses
- you may have to negotiate stairs (some stations do not have elevators)
- you must bring home what you take with you--plus anything that you purchase while abroad.

*When in doubt, leave it out*

Also, do not pack anything sharp in your carry-on baggage; security confiscates nail clippers, corkscrews, penknives, etc.

And, it’s important to remember that the added security is not a joking matter.

**A Note About Appropriate Attire:**

It is important for a couple of reasons to try to “fit in” with your peers in Europe. The more you assimilate, the more you will learn about the host culture. In addition, the less obvious you are as a foreigner, the safer you may be. You will notice that students the world over tend to dress somewhat casually. Jeans and t-shirts are commonly worn by young people in nearly every country these days. However, things that may identify you as an American include: flip-flops, sneakers and sports shoes, American flags and flag logos, shorts, American label book packs, baseball caps, ripped jeans.

Women have special concerns when it comes to attracting attention to themselves. Those who want to avoid unwanted attention should leave behind their: shorts; short skirts; short dresses; sleeveless, bare midriff, low-cut, and backless tops and dresses; expensive jewelry.

The easiest way to know how to dress is to observe what your European peers are wearing. Check tourist sites, restaurants, and venues that you will be visiting to make certain that your attire is acceptable for entry. People get turned away often for inappropriate attire.
More Travel Tips

- We hope that you will take full advantage of your stay abroad to see not only Innsbruck but also some surrounding sites. You will be doing yourself a favor to purchase a guidebook before leaving the U.S. A good guidebook will not only tell about the well-known tourist destinations in Austria, but also about places off the beaten path—often the most rewarding visits. And it can save you money by pointing out the bargains. Check out: Lonely Planet Guides (geared toward young, budget travelers)
  
  www.lonelyplanet.com
  www.tripadvisor.com

Food and Water - It is very common to experience stomach upset any time one travels (many international travelers to the United States experience this). Usually this is just a function of the disturbances caused by travel: new environment, jet lag, differences in eating habits and sleep patterns, etc. However, care should always be taken to ensure that food and water are fresh and hygienic. Good rules of thumb for those who are susceptible are:

- If you can’t cook it or peel it, forget it.
- If you are in an area where drinking water may be a problem, use bottled water for drinking and brushing your teeth. Remember that many of the microbes that cause stomach problems are unfazed by being frozen, so ice cubes made with tap water should not be used.

Phones - Many students encountered problems with using their cell phones in Europe. Even those students who obtained an international SIM card usually ended up spending about $2/minute on their calls, therefore one thing we recommend is Skype. Skype is an internet phone call; it enables you to make international calls through your computer. It is free to download and you put money on it and can add more as you use it up -- it is pretty much pay as you go. Last year it cost approximately $.025/minute to call the United States using Skype.

Calling Cards - International calling cards can be purchased at home or abroad. Sometimes when you purchase cards abroad they are only good for use from the country you purchase them in - some students also had problems with the
minutes on their cards being less than what they thought they were told. You can get international calling cards in the U.S. and they usually have a list of country access codes you need in order to make calls from the various places you’ll visit during your stay - however it seems as though you get a better rate abroad.

Computers - If you bring your laptop with you, you are allotted a certain number of minutes per week of internet access both in the WIST Haus Panorama and at the University of Innsbruck. You can use an ethernet cord from the WIST Haus Panorama for approximately a 15 Euro deposit (which you will get back in full when you return the cord) or you can bring your own, U.S. ethernet cords work in Austria as well.

Travel on trains – Last year most students were or would’ve been okay with the 10-15 day youth flexi pass or with the one-month pass. If you think about it you have three 4-day travel weekends - the first weekend when you arrive you will not likely use your Eurail pass. Following that, you have four weekends plus the last weekend when again it is unlikely that you will need to use your pass. Most people who bought the one-month pass were okay through half of the last weekend and just had to pay for their ticket home. If you have one of the flexi passes and travel after 7pm you can count it as your next traveling day on your pass. For example, if your train to Rome leaves at 8:00 pm on Thursday night and then Friday you will be traveling from Rome to Florence, you can put down Friday’s date and it will only count as one traveling day, not two. We recommend you come up with a blueprint of your potential travel plans before you leave and before you order your pass so you can decide what type of pass you will need.

Also bear in mind that the pass is only good for the actual ticket, most trains over 2 hours also require a reservation. Reservations on average can cost anywhere from $3-11 but they can be more if you are traveling a longer distance or reserving a sleeper car.

If interested in going longer distances you may want to look at Ryanair.com [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com) or EasyJet.com [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com) both of which offer low rates for European travel. If using these however, you can usually get the best rates by booking your flights far in advance.

Living Essentials - Many students wanted to cut their costs by cooking food in the dorm kitchens for dinner - but dining ware is one of the few things not provided for us by the WIST Haus Panorama. We recommend bringing a mess kit if you or a younger sibling has one from camping. It is small and lightweight and it is multi-functional as both a bowl to eat in, a skillet to cook in and also
provides you with silverware etc. Some students brought regular dinnerware with them or purchased it in Europe.

Food - You may want to bring with you some fruit snacks or other snacks from home even if just for the train/plane rides. As amazing as the food is in Europe, it is not the same as it is at home and it might be comforting to have a box of fruit roll-ups on hand.

Laundry - The laundry machines in the main WIST Haus Panorama building are less expensive and easier to use than those in the rear WIST Haus Panorama building. Many other students however, opted to hand wash their clothes or bring them to the nearby laundromat.

Bathing Suit - Some students go white water rafting or canyoning, or visit the nearby lake, and for these reasons you may want to bring your bathing suit. Also some of the hostels or hotels that you stay in may have a pool for you to use.

DVDs - If your laptop plays DVDs you may want to bring some of them. We strongly encourage students to take advantage of the many sights and activities that Innsbruck has to offer, however there are those lazy afternoons where you just want to watch some TV. Unfortunately, most of the channels we get are German, so a DVD might be a nice thing to have on hand. Keep in mind that there are regional codes on DVDs, so any DVDs you purchase in Europe may not be playable on a U.S. computer/DVD player, and vice versa.

Hostels - Often if you get a hostel card it is cheaper to book hostels - also some hostels will charge you for sheets and/or towels so you may want to bring extra. Some students brought old sheets that they no longer used; that way they could just throw them out at the end of the trip and not have to pack them for the trip home.

- Remember to carry your tickets, passport, and money in a neck pouch or money belt under your clothing. Money belts and neck pouches can be found at luggage stores, outdoors supplies stores, and on line.
- Once you have packed, carry your entire luggage around the block (including any carry-ons such as a coat or purse). This may sound like a joke but it’s not. Be aware that you are going to have to carry everything through the airport to the bus, train, taxi, or subway. Many international airports are very large and you may have a 10- or 20-minute walk. Don’t count on finding a luggage cart or porter, many airports don’t have them or don’t allow them into secure areas. Plan on carrying all of your possessions a long way. If you are uncomfortable walking around the block with your luggage, imagine how it will feel at 6:00 in the morning after you’ve been on a
train or plane all night. Add crowds and confusion and perhaps a few flights of stairs and you’ll be very sorry you packed so much!

*When in doubt, leave it out.*

- If your luggage is overweight or over-sized when you get to the airport, you could pay hundreds of dollars to get it on the plane.
- Your carry-on should contain a change of clothing, anything valuable such as your camera, medicine, a Stetson cap or shirt to help identify you to other Stetson students.

Do Not Take:

- Large containers of shampoo, soap, toothpaste, etc. Liquids are very heavy. Take small travel bottles of these items. This will get you through your first few showers until you have a chance to purchase these items in-country.
- Expensive or irreplaceable items. If it’s something you feel you can’t live without during a summer abroad, imagine how it would feel to lose it forever. Leave such items safely at home.

The first rule of packing for international travel is: pack light. The second rule of packing for international travel is: pack light. The third rule of packing for international travel is… well, I think I’ve made my point.

Pack light:

Get by with fewer clothes than you normally do. Temperatures will be relatively cool – pack for a Maine (rather than a Florida) summer. You will need a sweater or two plus an umbrella and light rain jacket. And, good walking shoes are vital for European travel.

Bring some “nice” outfits for dinners out, concerts, and other more formal occasions. Europeans generally are not as casual about dress as Americans. Jeans and t-shirts are fine for classes and general touring. Shorts and sleeveless shirts are not allowed in many churches, so plan accordingly. (It would be a shame to be turned back at the door to St. Peter’s Cathedral because your very informal attire is not considered sufficiently reverent.)

Pack a small shopping bag (many European stores do not furnish them). In addition to your luggage, bring a medium size backpack or overnight bag – you don’t want to haul your huge main suitcase along on weekend trips.

Money
• **DO NOT TAKE** a large amount of money with you. This is dangerous and impractical. Take about $100 with you. This should get you through your first few days abroad. Keep all other funds in a checking account in the U.S. and withdraw it as needed from ATMs abroad.

• **DO NOT TAKE** personal checks; you will not be able to cash them abroad.

• If you already have a U.S. checking account, ask your bank if you can withdraw money from ATMs in Austria. Ask which ATMs abroad will be compatible so that you are not charged exorbitant fees. If your bank cannot provide you with this information or service, we recommend that you open a new checking account with a bank that can.

• Using your ATM card while you’re abroad is economical (the exchange rates are favorable), safe (you only withdraw as much money as you need immediately), and practical (ATMs are generally easy to find and your money is delivered in the local currency).

• Be sure to contact your bank and let them know that you will be abroad, what countries you will be in and the dates that you will be away. This is a good idea with your credit cards as well. Sometimes when a bank or credit card company see charges in foreign countries, they regard them as suspicious and for your protection will place a block on your ATM or credit card.

There is some debate as to the safety of using ATMs in Russia, though students and professors have done so without incident thus far. It is advisable to use a checking account that has limited funds in it. This way if someone is able to gain access to your account they can only obtain a small amount of money.

• If your parents or others want to send you money, ask them to deposit it in your U.S. checking account. Cashing personal checks and other methods of obtaining money could be difficult or impossible.

• If at some point you require emergency funds, go to [https://wumt.westernunion.com](https://wumt.westernunion.com) to find a Western Union office. This is a very fast way of getting money to you.

• Visa and Master Card are widely accepted in most countries. Ask your bank whether there are charges related to using your debit or credit card for purchases abroad.

Europe is generally more expensive than the U.S. (Think “New York City” level of prices throughout. A Coke from the vending machine in the dorm is over a dollar.)

Travelers’ checks are still acceptable but more difficult to use. Students and faculty using debit cards reported good success. (You can use them 90% of the time – even “in the middle of nowhere” in Italy.)

ATM/MAC cards are useful because they provide up-to-the-minute exchange rates. Check with your bank to make sure yours will work internationally, and make sure you know your password by number. The keypads in Europe only
have numbers (no letters), which could cause trouble if your password is Dog and you don’t know the corresponding numbers. (It’s also a good idea to check to see if your bank has online checking, so you can keep track of your account.)

You can exchange money at the banks by the university. Rates there are about as good as you’ll find anywhere. For traveler’s checks it’s best to exchange a large amount at once, as there is (by Austrian law) a fee per transaction, no matter what the amount.

**Linens and towels:**

Linens and towels are provided by the WIST Haus Panorama, but some regard them as “skimpy” by U.S. standards. You might want to pack a small bottle of Woolite – many students last year did some hand washing in dorm-room sinks.

**Electrical appliances:**

Your electric hair dryer/alarm clock/curling iron/coffee pot/whatever will NOT get along with European electrical outlets. To use them, you’ll need:

1. A transformer that converts European 220 watts to American 110. Often transformers do not work well so a solution might be to buy items in Innsbruck.
2. An adapter that will fit your plug into a European outlet.

Stores that specialize in electronic goods, or in travel-related goods, should be able to supply these. But consider sharing, doing without, or buying a European model there. (See the above section, on “pack light”).

**Medications:**

If you take medication, IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT YOU TAKE ENOUGH FOR YOUR ENTIRE TIME IN EUROPE. Getting a prescription filled over there can be difficult. Having Mom mail you the asthma inhaler you forgot can quickly run you afoul of customs inspectors. Also, bring copies of your prescriptions.

- Optical Prescription: If you wear glasses or contact lenses, be sure to take a spare pair with you in case of loss or damage. Also take a copy of your lens prescription.

**Culture Shock**
Cultural differences make life fun and interesting. When you are immersed in another culture, however, one must often weather a period of discomfort, challenge, and frustration. This is called Culture Shock. Almost everyone who spends a lengthy time abroad experiences culture shock. The term is a bit of a misnomer, as the feeling is not so much one of shock but depression:

- Loss of interest in friends and activities
- Sadness and crying
- Fits of anger
- Loss of appetite
- Loneliness
- Self-isolation: staying in one’s room all the time/distancing oneself from others
- Difficulty concentrating
- A feeling of apathy

Culture shock differs greatly from person to person but often follows a typical pattern:

**Arrival:** feelings of excitement, wonder, euphoria, a “tourist’s enthusiasm.” This is sometimes called the honeymoon stage.

**Later:** the euphoria wears off; things become routine; the traveler may experience frustration with the host culture (“What’s the matter with these people?” “Why don’t they do things the right way?”); the traveler may idealize his/her own culture.

**Finally:** the traveler begins to feel at home in the surroundings. Once it’s all over, almost all students say that the summer abroad went by too quickly; they would like to stay longer and can hardly wait to return to Austria.

It is important to remember when you are experiencing culture shock:

- It is perfectly normal. Almost everyone goes through it. You’re not alone.
- It will pass. Culture shock goes away with time; by the end of the summer, most students wish they could stay longer!
- It is very difficult to advise people how to combat culture shock, but one thing that seems to work quite often is taking a break. **HAVE FUN!** You are there to study and learn, but explore and visit Europe as well. You may never have such an extended opportunity to travel again and getting out of your routine and having an adventure with friends can lift your spirits and your attitude about Europe, giving you that same “tourist’s enthusiasm” that you started with.

**Conduct**

Sometimes culture shock can have a very negative effect on students’ conduct, especially if a person is feeling “down,” frustrated, bored and angry. Remember that as American students abroad you represent the United States and Stetson University. The way you conduct yourself under pressure makes an impression on people in Austria. If
you conduct yourself in a negative way, you simply solidify in the minds of the local people the negative stereotypes of Americans that they may have heard of. If you conduct yourself with grace, self-control, and sensitivity to your host culture, you can dispel those stereotypes. Whether you make a good impression or a bad impression, it affects us all as Americans. This is a big responsibility, but you were chosen to study abroad because we know you are capable of acting as good ambassadors for Stetson University and for your country and culture.

Returning Home:

- Before leaving Austria, remember to convert your remaining currency back into U.S. dollars.
- Prepare to experience an interesting phenomenon known as Reverse Culture Shock when you return home. After arriving home, many of you will want to catch the first flight back to Innsbruck. Although you will have experienced much and will have grown and broadened yourself considerably, you will be returning to a setting that seems painfully unchanged. You will probably be very excited about your adventure abroad; your friends may be less so. You may find them tuning you out whenever you bring up the subject. Life back home may seem routine, claustrophobic, unexciting. It is a very challenging readjustment. For many, coming home is more difficult than the culture shock they experienced while abroad.
  - Be patient with yourself and others.
  - Stay in touch with the friends that you made abroad, both those who remain in Austria and those who return with you to Stetson. They may be the only people who understand how you are feeling.
  - Know that Europe will always be there and there is always a chance to return, and many students do.

Informative website to visit:

www.innsbruck-tourism.at/

For more information, you may visit the Stetson Library website and look up “CultureGrams.” CultureGrams consist of country reports updated annually: World Edition is especially useful for those planning trips abroad. It is a concise reference tool created by natives and long-time residents to give you an insider’s perspective. Each report seeks a balance between generality and breadth, on one hand, and detail and depth on the other. Local customs are included, along with national flags, national anthems, basic economic and social data, politics and history, etc.
You can access CultureGrams by going to the Library’s database page, http://www2.stetson.edu/library/databases.php, scrolling down the alphabetical list, then click on CultureGrams:Country Info. CultureGrams can also be accessed by visiting http://online.culturegrams.com/.